

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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SETBACKS FOR LIVESTOCK CONFINEMENTS APPLY TO ALL SIZES

DES MOINES – At least two recently built animal confinement operations do not meet state requirements for setbacks from streams and other waters.

The DNR found facilities in Washington and Mahaska counties that are less than 500 feet from a water source.

“We are especially concerned that the smaller producers aren’t as aware of the rules as the larger producers,” said Josh Sobaski, an environmental specialist in the Washington DNR field office.

Regardless of the size of operation, state laws require livestock or poultry facilities to locate buildings and storage structures away from wells, streams and other waters.

New or expanded facilities must be built at least 500 to 1,000 feet from water sources, which are specifically defined and include Iowa rivers, streams, ag drainage wells and known sinkholes. While many farm ponds and privately owned lakes are excluded, water sources can also include lakes, reservoirs, ponds and ditches.

“A rule of thumb definition for a stream water source is any stream that shows up on the soil survey as a one-dot or three-dot stream and has a definite bed and banks,” said Sobaski.

“A water source may not always have continuous flow, so it can be a hard call to determine without using maps and walking the field,” said Julie Nelson, an

environmental specialist in the Des Moines DNR field office. “So if you have any question about whether or not there’s a water source nearby, call the DNR field office and make sure that what we think and what you think agree. This is too big an investment to be wrong, especially if you can correct it easily in the pre-construction phase,” she added.

Nelson encourages all producers to contact their DNR regional field offices about other pre-construction setbacks and requirements. Producers who will have more than 500 animal units are required to submit information to the DNR at least 30 days before building.

The DNR will issue facilities that have not met the setbacks a notice of violation. The DNR could issue a penalty or require secondary containment. If the latter is required, the dike must be built to DNR specifications and designed to hold 120 percent of manure that is located above ground level.

For more information, check the DNR website at www.iowadnr.com or at <http://www.state.ia.us/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/files/distreq.doc>

For more information, contact Julie Nelson at 515-725-0268 or Josh Sobaski at 319-653-2135.

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BURNING CHEMICALLY TREATED SEED CORN NOT ADVISED

DES MOINES — Concerns about potentially higher home heating costs and the chill in the air have many Iowans again interested in using corn burners for warmth. For many, this is a safe and reliable heat source, but DNR officials caution against burning chemically treated seed corn, which can release toxic chemicals when burned.

“Shelled corn from local farmers and mills is abundant, cheap, safe and makes burning of chemically treated seed corn an unnecessary risk for home use,” said Christine Paulson, an air specialist with the DNR.

She said many corn burner manufacturers also recommend against using chemically treated seed corn that is pink or red in color and contains captan and other pesticides that can emit toxins when burned.

“Burning treated seed corn can emit low levels of hydrochloric acids and thiophosgene, also known as mustard gas,” said Paulson. “The highest emissions can occur at start up and shutdown when combustion temperatures are lower, or if the unit is damped down.”

“Burning regular corn can be a clean, excellent source of heat using renewable, Iowa grown energy,” she said. “Just avoid chemically treated seed corn, often provided free by companies trying to get rid of old supplies.”

For more information contact Christine Paulson at 515-242-5154.

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DNR FORESTRY BUREAU OFFERS HOLIDAY TREE PACKAGES

DES MOINES — The DNR Forestry Bureau has created “A Gift of Iowa’s Nature” as a way for Iowans to give a gift of trees this holiday season.

The State Forest Nursery raises the high quality native tree and shrub seedlings for Iowa residents. To promote and encourage the planting of more native trees and shrubs for songbird and wildlife habitat, the DNR has four packets for the public to purchase this holiday season. Delivery is in the spring. The packets are:

Songbird Packet – 20 trees (8” to 24” tall) for \$20. Includes two bur oaks, two white pines, four wild plum, four chokecherry, four gray dogwoods and four serviceberry. Recommended by Audubon Iowa.

Wildlife Packet – 200 trees (8” to 24” tall) for \$90. Includes 50 white spruce, 50 bur oak, 50 gray dogwoods and 50 common lilac.

Turkey Packet – 200 trees (8” to 24” tall) for \$90. Includes 50 bur oak, 50 red oak, 50 pin oak and 50 gray dogwood. Recommended by the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Pheasant and Quail Packet – 200 trees (8” to 24” tall) for \$90. Includes 50 redcedar, 50 wild plum, 50 ninebark and 50 gray dogwood. Recommended by Iowa Pheasants Forever chapters.

To receive this holiday gift in time for Christmas, order by Dec. 19, 2003. Upon ordering, the State Nursery will send a gift certificate to the recipient and identify whom the gift was from. The trees will be delivered in the spring of 2004. To order, or for more information about the packets and gift certificate, call the State Forest Nursery at 1-800-865-2477.

Packages support DNR efforts to expand songbird and wildlife habitat for today and for tomorrow.

For more information, contact John Walkowiak, DNR Forestry Bureau Chief, at 515-242-5966 or at john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us.

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IOWA AND SOUTH DAKOTA BEGIN WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT ON LOWER BIG SIOUX RIVER

SIOUX CITY — A multi-state assessment of water quality is being undertaken in the lower Big Sioux River and its tributaries from Sioux Falls, S.D., to Sioux City, Iowa. The assessment also includes the entire Rock River drainage located in northwestern Iowa. The assessment is being coordinated by the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts in conjunction with the Iowa DNR and the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (SD DENR).

“Coordinating water quality assessments on waters that border two states can be difficult,” said Angela Ehlers, executive director of the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts. “Both states must be committed to correcting problems on their respective sides of a river or lake if water quality is to be restored. Fortunately, both South Dakota and Iowa are committed to improving this stretch of the Big Sioux River and its tributaries.”

The lower Big Sioux River was listed on both states’ impaired waterbody list. Each state is required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act to prepare a biennial list of waterbodies that do not meet water quality standards for their designated beneficial uses. The list is then used to identify waterbodies that need a total maximum daily load (TMDL) to determine the amount of pollution a waterbody can receive and still maintain water quality standards. The goal of a total maximum daily load is to ensure that waters attain or maintain their designated beneficial uses, such as for drinking, fishing, swimming or irrigation.

Water monitoring results have indicated that the Big Sioux River between Sioux Falls and Sioux City is impaired by sediment and fecal coliform bacteria.

The coordinated assessment project will seek to determine and document pollutant sources, and identify feasible restoration alternatives to improve or maintain water quality. It should also result in an established total maximum daily load. A restoration project to clean up the pollutant sources is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2005.

To learn more about the project, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), or the agencies involved, visit the following Web sites:

Iowa DNR: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/index.html

South Dakota DENR: www.state.sd.us/denr/DFTA/WatershedProtection

South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts: www.sd.nacdnet.org/

For more information, contact Bill Graham of the Iowa DNR at 515-281-5917 or Alan Wittmuss of the SD DENR at 605-677-6163.